DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 263 795 HE 018 827

TITLE	Joint Statement on Transfer and Award of Academic Credit. Self-Regulation Initiatives: Guidelines for Colleges and Universities, No. 4.
INSTITUTION	American Council on Education, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Jan 80
NOTE	5p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Office on Self-Regulation Initiatives, American Council on Education, One Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C. 20036 (free with self-addressed, stamped envelope).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Standards; Accreditation (Institutions); *College Credits; College Transfer Students; Comparative Analysis; *Educational Quality; *Evaluation Criteria; Guidelines; Higher Education; Position Papers; *Transfer Policy
IDENTIFIERS	*Self Regulation

ABSTRACT

Guidelines for colleges concerning policies and practices for transfer and award of credit are offered in a joint statement by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the American Council on Education, and the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. Three considerations regarding transfer of credit from one institution to another are identified: (1) the educational quality of the school from which the student transfers; (2) the comparability of the nature, content, and level of credit earned to that offered by the receiving school; and (3) the appropriateness and applicability of the credit earned to the programs offered by the receiving school, in light of the student's educational goals. Accreditation speaks primarily to the first of these considerations, serving as the basic indicator that an institution meets certain minimum standards. At some colleges, there may be differences between the acceptance of credit for admission purposes and the applicability of credit for degree purposes. Transfer-of-credit policies should also encompass educational accomplishment attained in extra-institutional settings. Transfer of credit from foreign institutions and unaccredited institutions is also addressed. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

SELF-REGULATION INITIATIVES:

GUIDELINES FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

No. 4

January 1980

JOINT STATEMENT ON TRANSFER AND AWARD OF ACADEMIC CREDIT.

ED263795

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

ACE

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

✓ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

HE 012 227

Self-Regulation Initiatives: Guidelines for Colleges and Universities

No. 4
January 1980

Joint Statement on Transfer and Award of Academic Credit

This statement is directed to institutions of postsecondary education and others concerned with the transfer of academic credit among institutions and award of academic credit for extra-institutional learning. Basic to this statement is the principle that each institution is responsible for determining its own policies and practices with regard to the transfer and award of credit. Institutions are encouraged to review their policies and practices periodically to assure that they accomplish the institution's objectives and that they function in a manner that is fair and equitable to students. Any statements, this one or others referred to, should be used as guides, not as substitutes, for institutional policies and practices.

Transfer of credit is a concept that now involves transfer between dissimilar institutions and curricula and recognition of extra-institutional learning, as well as transfer between institutions and curricula of similar characteristics. As their personal circumstances and educational objectives change, students seek to have their learning, wherever and however attained, recognized by institutions where they enroll for further study. It is important for reasons of social equity and educational effectiveness, as well as the wise use of resources, for all institutions to develop reasonable and definitive policies and procedures for acceptance of transfer credit. Such policies and procedures should provide maximum consideration for the individual student who has changed institutions or objectives. It is the receiving institution's responsibility to provide reasonable and definitive policies and procedures for determining a student's knowledge in required subject areas. All institutions have a responsibility to furnish transcripts and other documents necessary for a receiving institution to judge the quality and quantity of the work. Institutions also have a responsibility to advise the students that the work **reflected** on the transcript **may or may not** be accepted by a receiving institution.

Inter-institutional Transfer of Credit

Transfer of credit from one institution to another involves at least three considerations:

(1) the educational quality of the institution from which the student transfers;

(2) the comparability of the nature, content, and level of credit earned to that offered by the receiving institution; and

(3) the appropriateness and applicability of the credit earned to the programs offered by the receiving institution, in light of the student's educational goals.

This statement was developed by the three national associations whose member institutions are directly involved in the transfer and award of academic credit—the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the American Council on Education, and the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. The need for such a statement came from an awareness of the growing complexity of transfer policies and practices, which have been brought about, in part, by the changing contours of postsecondary education. With increasing frequency, students are pursuing their education in a variety of institutional and extra-institutional settings. Social equity and the intelligent use of resources requires that validated learning be recognized wherever it takes place.

The statement is intended to serve as a guide to institutions in the development or review of policies dealing with transfer and award of credit. It is under periodic review by the three associations and reactions would, of course, be welcome. Comments may be directed to Henry Spille, Director of the Office on Educational Credit and Credentials, ACE.

J. W. Peltason, President

Accredited Institutions

Accreditation speaks primarily to the first of these considerations, serving as the basic indicator that an institution meets certain minimum standards. Users of accreditation are urged to give careful attention to the accreditation conferred by accrediting bodies recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA). COPA has a formal process of recognition which requires that any accrediting body so recognized must meet the same standards. Under these standards, COPA has recognized a number of accrediting bodies, including:

(1) regional accrediting commissions (which historically accredited the more traditional colleges and universities but which now accredit proprietary, vocational-technical, and single-purpose institutions as well);

(2) national accrediting bodies that accredit various kinds of specialized institutions; and

(3) certain professional organizations that accredit free-standing professional schools, in addition to programs within multi-purpose institutions. (COPA annually publishes a list of recognized accrediting bodies, as well as a directory of institutions accredited by these organizations.)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Although accrediting agencies vary in the ways they are organized and in their statements of scope and mission, all accrediting bodies that meet COPA's standards for recognition function to assure that the institutions or programs they accredit have met generally accepted minimum standards for accreditation.

Accreditation affords reason for confidence in an institution's or a program's purposes, in the appropriateness of its resources and plans for carrying out these purposes, and in its effectiveness in accomplishing its goals, insofar as these things can be judged. Accreditation speaks to the probability, but does not guarantee, that students have met acceptable standards of educational accomplishment.

Comparability and Applicability

Comparability of the nature, content, and level of transfer credit and the appropriateness and applicability of the credit earned to programs offered by the receiving institution are as important in the evaluation process as the accreditation status of the institution at which the transfer credit was awarded. Since accreditation does not address these questions, this information must be obtained from catalogues and other materials and from direct contact between knowledgeable and experienced faculty and staff at both the receiving and sending institutions. When such considerations as comparability and appropriateness of credit are satisfied, however, the receiving institution should have reasonable confidence that students from accredited institutions are qualified to undertake the receiving institution's educational program.

Admissions and Degree Purposes

At some institutions there may be differences between the acceptance of credit for admission purposes and the applicability of credit for degree purposes. A receiving institution may accept previous work, place a credit value on it, and enter it on the transcript. However, that previous work, because of its nature and not its inherent quality, may be determined to have no applicability to a specific degree to be pursued by the student.

Institutions have a responsibility to make this distinction, and its implications, clear to students before they decide to enroll. This should be a matter of full disclosure, with the best interests of the student in mind. Institutions also should make every reasonable effort to reduce the gap between credits accepted and credits applied toward an educational credential.

Unaccredited Institutions

Institutions of postsecondary education that are not accredited by COPA-recognized accrediting bodies may lack that status for reasons unrelated to questions of quality. Such institutions, however, cannot provide a reliable, third-party assurance that they meet or exceed minimum standards. That being the case, students transferring from such institutions may encounter special problems in gaining acceptance and transferring credits to accredited institutions. Institutions admitting students from unaccredited institutions should take special steps to validate credits previously earned.

Foreign Institutions

In most cases, foreign institutions are chartered and authorized by their national governments, usually through a ministry of education. Although this provides for a standardization within a country, it does not produce useful information about comparability from one country to another. No other nation has a system comparable to voluntary accreditation. The Division of Higher Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is engaged in a project to develop international compacts for the acceptance of educational credentials. At the operational level, four organizations—the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), the National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Student Credentials (CEC), the National Association for Foreign Student Admissions (NAFA), and the National Liaison Committee on Foreign Student Admissions (NLC)—often can assist institutions by distributing general guidelines on admission and placement of foreign students. Equivalency or placement recommendations are to be evaluated in terms of the programs and policies of the individual receiving institution.

Validation of Extra-institutional and Experiential Learning for Transfer Purposes

Transfer-of-credit policies should encompass educational accomplishment attained in extra-institutional settings as well as at accredited postsecondary institutions. In deciding on the award of credit for extra-institutional learning, institutions will find the services of the American Council on Education's Office of Educational Credit helpful. One of the Office's functions is to operate and foster programs to determine credit equivalencies for various modes of extra-institutional learning. The Office maintains evaluation programs for formally structured courses offered by the military, and civilian noncollegiate sponsors such as business, corporations, government agencies, and labor unions. Evaluation services are also available for examination programs, for occupations with validated job proficiency evaluation systems, and for correspondence courses offered by schools accredited by the National Home Study Council. The results are published in a Guide series. Another resource is the General Education Development (GED) Testing Program, which provides a means for assessing high school equivalency.

For learning that has not been validated through the ACE formal credit recommendations process or through credit-by-examination programs, institutions are urged to explore the Council for Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL) procedures and processes. Pertinent CAEL publications designed for this purpose are also listed.

Uses of This Statement

This statement has been endorsed by the three national associations most concerned with practices in the area of transfer and award of credit—the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the American Council on Education/Commission on Educational Credit, and the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation.

Institutions are encouraged to use this statement as a basis for discussions in developing or reviewing institutional policies with regard to transfer. If the statement reflects an institution's policies, that institution might want to use this publication to inform faculty, staff, and students.

It is recommended that accrediting bodies reflect the essential precepts of this statement in their criteria.

Approved by the COPA Board
October 10, 1978

Approved by the American Council on Education/Commission on Educational Credit
December 5, 1978

Approved by the Executive Committee, American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
November 21, 1978

This statement is one in a series of policy guidelines developed to help higher education respond to issues by means of voluntary self-regulation. The Office on Self-Regulation Initiatives, a program of the American Council on Education, works cooperatively with representative associations and institutional leaders in identifying issues on which self-regulation is needed, formulating responses to those issues, and distributing the resulting guidelines and recommendations.

College and university administrators are urged to review the guidelines as a basis for considering changes in existing institutional policies. Each statement is developed through a process of wide review among representatives of different types of institutions and professional responsibilities in higher education. They are intended to summarize general principles of good practice that can be adapted to the specific circumstances of each college and university.

The statements are not copyrighted and may be reproduced in the interest of education. Permission for resale, reprinting, or commercial use should be requested in advance from ACE's Publications Department.

For further information, contact Elaine El-Khawas, Director, Office on Self-Regulation Initiatives. Additional copies of this statement may be obtained upon request to the office. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

American Council on Education
One Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C. 20036